



About MEFA

- Not-for-profit state authority created in 1982
- Helping families plan, save, and pay for college
- Keeping you on track with college planning:
 - **MEFA.org:** tools & resources
 - **Emails:** sign up tonight!
 - **Blog:** subscribe online
 - **Facebook & Twitter:** like us and follow us

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www.mefa.org/admissions

Videos, Blog & Social Media
 Resources for other grades
 Step-by-step tips to walk you through the process
 College Admissions Toolkit

Email Sign-up
 Find other seminars and events
 Free College and Career Web Portal

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MEFA Email Service for Parents

Ongoing assistance with deadlines, helpful hints, recommendations, etc.

Sample Topics:

- **March/April:** Campus visits and college fairs
- **May:** Searching for scholarships
- **July:** Writing the college essay
- **October:** Understanding Early Action/Early Decision

Sign up tonight on your seminar evaluation form

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Seminar Topics

- Current trends
- Your college list
- Campus visits
- The application process
- Financial aid
- Free resources



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Trends in College Admissions

- Earlier Process
- Students applying to a greater number of schools
- Demonstrated interest a factor
- Admission to public institutions now more competitive
- More a parent-driven process
- Rise of social media
- Globalization: more international students coming to U.S.

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Developing Your List

- Think about “fit” and match your needs
- Do your research
- Balancing your list
 - Academic
 - Financial
 - Size/Setting



Try the Interactive College Interview at www.yourplanforthefuture.org

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Assess Prospects for Admission

Ultimate Goal: Develop final list with colleges of each type:

% of List:

25% **Probable:** Chances for admission are strong;
Make sure at least one is affordable

50% **Target:** Chances for admission are 50/50

25% **Reach:** Chances for admissions are significantly
less than 50% (difficult to predict)

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YourPlanForTheFuture.org

FREE college and career planning tool

Resources include:

- Skills and interest assessments
- Career exploration
- College search
- SAT, ACT, and MCAS test prep tutorials
- Financial aid and scholarship information

Available in English and Spanish



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Informal & Formal Campus Visits

Look beyond the brochures and websites

Informal visits

- Size
- Setting

Formal Visits

- Academics
- Activities
- Housing
- Culture



College fairs are an alternative if you can't get to a school!

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College Application Options

Whichever option you choose, don't leave things to the last minute!

- Regular Decision
- Early Action: Restricted and Unrestricted
- Early Decision
- Rolling Admission
- Open Admission

Deadlines are important! Make sure to keep track.

Manage deadlines with MEFA's College Admissions Toolkit

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College Application Types & Components

Application requirements may vary at each college.

College Application Types:

- Common App
- Universal College App
- College website online app
- Paper

Your application may include:

- Application form
- High school transcript
- Standardized test scores
- Recommendations
- Activity list or resume
- Personal essay
- Interview

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Academic Readiness

Your transcript is more than just a list of grades.

- Rigor
- Good grades vs. challenging classes
- Improvement over time
- Exceeding minimum requirements
- Relevance to college plans
- Sliding scale for MA public colleges & universities



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Standardized Tests

- **PSAT** and **PLAN** for practice and assessment
- **SAT** and **ACT** measure college readiness
 - Check with your school counselor for registration deadlines and test dates
- **SAT Subject Tests & AP** show subject knowledge
- **Accuplacer & COMPASS** determine placement in college courses
- There are 850 test-optional schools in the U.S. (Check FairTest.org)

Find free test prep tools at www.yourplanforthefuture.org

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Activity List/Resume

- Extracurricular talents and interests
- Showcase what you do and the depth of the activity/job
- Include family responsibilities and employment
- Highlight the impact on your community



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Essays

Your application essays say a lot about you.

- Share something meaningful and personal
- Start writing early
- Try different topics and approaches
- Include life-shaping/challenging experiences
- Leave time for careful proof-reading

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Letters of Recommendation

Adults who know you well can offer a helpful perspective on your abilities and strengths.

- What are your school guidelines?
- Whom to ask?
- When to ask?
- How to ask?



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Interviews

A face-to-face conversation lets colleges see the person behind the numbers.

- Two types: 1. Informational and 2. Evaluative
- Be prepared to answer open-ended questions
- Know your reasons for applying to the college
- Ask thoughtful questions
- Cover the basics
- Relax and be yourself

Prep for interviews with MEFA's College Admissions Toolkit

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A Word About the Wait List

- Increasing popularity
- Some schools have a very long list
- Must submit enrollment deposit at an accepted school
 - This is usually non-refundable
- Accepted off the waitlist = minimal financial aid
- Steps to take when on the waitlist:
 - Write a short note to the admissions counselor
 - Update the school with recent grades and awards

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Understanding College Affordability

Research costs and financial aid now.

- What is the Cost of Attendance and Net Price?
- Who qualifies for financial aid?
- How and when should you apply?
- Need-based vs. Merit-based and different deadlines

Financial aid deadlines are so important!

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Staying on Track Through Senior Year

Spring/Summer Junior Year

- Attend college fairs
- Visit campuses
- Identify teachers for letters of recommendation
- Brainstorm essay topics
- Take the SAT/ACT
- Research outside scholarships

Fall Senior Year

- Finalize the college list
- Re-take the SAT/ACT
- Secure letters of recommendation
- Attend MEFA's College Financing Seminar
- Apply for outside scholarships

Winter Senior Year

- Submit financial aid applications
- Send in mid-year grade reports

Spring Senior Year

- Receive admission and financial aid offers
- Attend MEFA's After the Acceptance Seminar
- Choose your college by May 1

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Free College Planning Resources

- **Net Price Calculators**
 - Provides a personal net price at each college
- **College Navigator** (Department of Education)
 - College search with admissions, academic, & cost info
 - CollegeNavigator.gov
- **College Scorecard** (White House)
 - College search with average net price, loan default rates, and median loan debt
 - CollegeCost.ed.gov/Scorecard/

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What You Can Do Now

- Complete the seminar evaluation/sign up for MEFA emails
- Finalize your college list
- Download the College Admissions Toolkit at:
www.mefa.org/admissions
- Set up a profile at
www.yourplanforthefuture.org



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Thank You

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